



*We are Yakima*  
comprehensive plan 2040

## VISIONING SURVEY SUMMARY

**DRAFT** | APRIL 2016

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

A visioning survey was created in order to identify and prioritize issues in the City as part of the Comprehensive Plan 2040 Update. The online survey was posted on the City website, and was advertised at the Open House held on February 23<sup>rd</sup> as well as through the following ways: an email blast, a display ad, the Open House legal notice, on Y-Pac, on the Open House postcard advertisement, a press release, and at Planning Commission meetings. There were a handful of paper surveys completed and received as well. The survey was open between February 17th, 2016 and March 31st, 2016 and received a total of 185 responses. The following sections summarize the results of the survey.

## 2.0 SURVEY RESPONSES

### 2.1 Assets and Challenges

#### Yakima's Strengths

The first survey question asked respondents to identify Yakima's strengths by ranking a list of provided assets. Those assets ranked the highest include Yakima's natural setting, its diverse communities and neighborhoods, and the community character (the look and feel of the community).

**Exhibit 1. What do you believe are Yakima's strengths?**

	Total Score	Rank
Natural setting	2,087	1
Diverse communities and neighborhoods	2,063	2
Community character: the look and feel of my community	2,022	3
Access to services and business	1,869	4
Quality municipal services and business	1,830	5
Sense of community/support of community in my neighborhood	1,812	6
Recreational amenities	1,798	7
Quality schools	1,742	8
Housing choices and prices	1,736	9
Good location for my business	1,494	10
Historic character	1,272	11
Safe place to live	1,266	12
Cultural and civic events	1,256	13
Urban character of downtown	1,212	14
Access to jobs	1,043	15
Other	386	16

N = 183

Note: Scores are weighted calculations. Items ranked higher are given a greater score than items that are ranked lower. The total score for each item is the sum of the weighted scores. The rank is the overall rank for all entries based on the weighted scores for each item.

Terms:

- Diverse community – A community that is composed of a variety of people with different racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds.

- Community character – The look and feel of a community, including natural, physical, and cultural characteristics.
- Urban character – Of or having characteristics that make a place feel “urban” as opposed to suburban or rural. Factors contributing to urban character include the lifestyle, amenities, social structure, and built environment associated with cities.
- Prosperous community – A community that is economically successful and sustainable and provides opportunity for all.

### Comments on Strengths

There were 47 comments on Yakima’s strengths. Themes identified in open-ended comments about Yakima’s strengths include:

- Parking downtown is okay, but respondents don’t want any taken away and multiple comments indicated a desire for more angled parking downtown
- The great weather is a strength and enables safe walking, biking, and agriculture/gardening opportunities
- Yakima has great trails, such as the Greenway, Cowiche Canyon, Powerhouse Canal, WM. O. Douglas, etc.
- Yakima’s people are friendly and they care about the community and each other
- There is a small town feel in Yakima, even though it’s not a small town and has a diverse population
- The city is relatively affordable
- There is access to the outdoors and the surrounding natural setting
- The central location with proximity to Seattle, Spokane, Tri-Cities, and Portland is a strength

### Yakima’s Challenges

The survey asked respondents to identify Yakima’s challenges by ranking a list of provided assets. Those topics identified as the greatest challenges in Yakima include job opportunities, promoting economic development and infill development downtown, and the quality and variety of parks and recreation opportunities.

**Exhibit 2. What do you believe are Yakima’s biggest challenges?**

	Total Score	Rank
Job opportunities	2,170	1
Promoting economic development and infill development downtown	1,933	2
Quality and variety of parks and recreation opportunities	1,890	3
Crime and public safety	1,857	4
Housing variety and affordability	1,749	5
Availability and quality of infrastructure (roads; sidewalks, street lights; sewer; etc.)	1,706	6
Maintaining municipal services (police; fire; stormwater; water; sewer; etc.)	1,706	7
Providing a variety of retail and other businesses	1,581	8
Environmental protection of natural resources and critical areas (such as wetlands; areas prone to flooding; areas with geological hazards; etc.)	1,470	9
Design of construction (such as quality of materials; look of the building; public spaces)	1,384	10
Social equity	1,167	11
Cultural awareness	1,024	12

	Total Score	Rank
Tax rates	993	13
Language barriers	955	14
Other	375	15

N = 184

Note: Scores are weighted calculations. Items ranked higher are given a greater score than items that are ranked lower. The total score for each item is the sum of the weighted scores. The rank is the overall rank for all entries based on the weighted scores for each item.

### Comments on Challenges

There were 45 comments on Yakima's challenges. Themes identified in open-ended comments about Yakima's challenges include:

- Economic development and infill development are a challenge city-wide, not just downtown
- There are people whose voices aren't being heard
- There are not enough unique attractions
- Need design standards for multi-family housing
- There's not enough infill
- There's a lack of parks and pathways and bicycle infrastructure, particularly those connecting homes to services
- Yakima is challenged by its reputation/image by those outside the City

## 2.2 Transportation

### Investment Priorities

The survey asked respondents to help prioritize transportation investments for the future of Yakima. Those transportation topics identified as high priorities include pedestrian access and experience, bicycle access and experience, roadway safety and reducing collisions, the quality of roads and road maintenance, and moving freight and goods.

**Exhibit 3. How important are each of the following transportation features?**

	Don't Know	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Total Responses
Reducing Traffic Congestion	0	13	34	65	45	23	180
Improving signs and directions (signage)	3	6	43	73	44	12	181
Pedestrian access/experience	2	6	7	41	53	70	179
Bicycle access/experience	2	12	20	37	48	61	180
Transit connections (connections between various modes of transportation)	8	11	12	54	56	39	180

	Don't Know	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Total Responses
Roadway safety/reduce collisions	2	7	10	31	77	54	181
Public transit availability where I need it	7	16	17	59	43	34	176
Public transit frequency	6	11	20	61	49	33	180
Ridesharing/carpooling	10	23	48	60	26	12	179
Quality of roads/road maintenance	0	0	4	22	71	82	179
Moving freight & goods	11	6	13	60	64	26	180

N = 181

## 2.3 Housing

### Important Housing Issues

The housing section of the survey asked respondents about important housing issues within the City of Yakima. Although few respondents thought any housing issues were unimportant, those topics of highest priority include having homes of different types available to buy or rent in varying price ranges, housing available within walking distance of amenities, and housing available to public and social services.

#### Exhibit 4. What do you see as the most important housing issues?

	Don't Know	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Total Responses
Homes of different types (single family, multifamily, townhomes, etc.) available to buy/rent in your price range	0	4	6	46	64	59	179
Housing options available within walking distance of amenities such as bus stops, work, and shopping	0	6	13	44	72	45	180
Housing options available close to public and social services (family services, senior services, health care, libraries, schools, etc.)	1	8	16	52	67	36	180
Improving the quality and design of housing in Yakima	1	4	28	52	58	35	178
Housing options available downtown	4	15	37	52	47	24	179

N = 180

## Comments on Housing

Themes on housing issues recognized in the open-ended comments include:

- Affordable housing options for the entire range of buyers and renters within the downtown area is missing
- There are many residents living under the poverty level but there is an 8-year waitlist for housing assistance through YHA
- Absentee landlords are a problem
- Housing condition is poor
- Yakima needs more opportunities for higher density residential development, particularly in downtown
- Prices are too high for the income levels in the area
- Need to improve the permanent options for homeless and low income households
- Improvements to existing housing and neighborhoods will support the improvement of downtown

## 2.4 Parks and Recreation

### Existing Recreation Opportunities

The survey asked respondents to think about existing recreation opportunities and facilities and consider whether there are too much, an adequate amount, or too little of these resources. There were very few respondents who felt there were too many opportunities or facilities for recreation. Those opportunities and facilities which respondents most frequently felt there were too little of include passive recreation opportunities, greater investment in the quality and design of parks, and better physical access to parks.

**Exhibit 5. Which of these types of recreation opportunities do we have too much, too little, or an adequate amount of?**

	Don't Know	Too Little	Adequate Amount	Too Much	Total Responses
Large, regional parks	8	62	108	1	179
Neighborhood and pocket parks	3	91	83	3	180
Trails	8	91	76	4	179
Sports fields	16	43	99	18	176
Passive recreation opportunities (such as wildlife viewing, walking, biking, boating)	3	102	64	2	171
Active recreation opportunities (activities requiring facilities, such as playground activities, soccer, softball)	16	56	96	11	179
Greater investment in the quality and design of existing parks	13	102	60	4	179
Parks programming offered by the Parks Department	33	62	77	3	175
Preservation of land and wildlife habitat	18	81	75	4	178

	Don't Know	Too Little	Adequate Amount	Too Much	Total Responses
Better physical access to parks (connections, fill gaps in trails)	17	95	64	2	178

N = 180

### Comments on Existing Parks and Recreation Opportunities

Themes on recreation issues recognized in the open-ended comments include:

- Yakima needs an outdoor public pool and aquatics center, as well as a water park
- Better access to recreation areas and opportunities for kids
- There is a desire for more courts – volleyball courts, basketball courts, etc.
- Need more interconnected bike routes and pedestrian paths that are functional for moving people and not just scenic
- More investment in Eastern Yakima
- More green space, garden areas, farmers markets, and gardening in all neighborhoods
- Need an off-leash dog park

### Existing Facilities and Programming

The question asking about the quality of existing parks and recreation facilities and programming indicated that most existing parks and recreation assets are good but could be improved. Those existing facilities and programming most commonly identified as “poor” include neighborhood and pocket parks, trails, and physical access to parks. The two types of recreation facilities most frequently seen as “great” include sports fields and regional recreation opportunities.

#### Exhibit 6. Would you say Yakima’s facilities and programming are great, good but could be improved, or poor?

	Poor	Good, but could be improved	Great	Total Responses
Large, regional parks	29	122	26	177
Neighborhood and pocket parks	62	100	16	178
Trails	48	100	29	177
Sports fields	17	90	67	174
Parks programming offered by the Parks Department	31	102	36	169
Preserved land and wildlife habitat	42	92	38	172
Physical access to parks (connections to, from and between facilities)	53	94	23	170
Regional recreation opportunities (fly fishing, skiing, mountain biking, trails)	40	75	60	175

N = 178

### Comments on Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities and Programming

Other facility and programming themes recognized in the open-ended comments include:

- Need after school activities and other programming to keep kids busy
- Some parks don't feel safe to go to or they are not well maintained
- The Parks Department does amazing things with limited resources
- Some parks are always busy but others are underutilized due to the illegal activities that tend to take place there
- There is inequity in park quality across the city

## 2.5 Historic Preservation

### Preservation Priorities

The survey asked respondents to help prioritize historic preservation activities. All activities are seen as important, with preservation and reuse of historic buildings identified as “very important” slightly more frequently than the other preservation activities.

**Exhibit 7. Prioritize the following historic preservation activities.**

	Don't Know	Very Unimportant	Unimportant	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important	Total Responses
Promoting historic register listings, which applies protection to those places listed	6	13	11	56	60	35	181
Restoration to historic conditions	5	9	13	58	65	31	181
Preservation and reuse of historic structures, which involves rehabilitating old structures and finding a new use for them while maintaining their historic character	1	9	9	41	67	53	180
Incentivizing preservation of historic buildings through various programs (e.g. tax incentives)	4	12	8	46	76	33	179
Adopting design standards for new development in historic buildings to reinforce historic character and scale	2	14	15	48	64	38	181

N = 181

### Comments on Historic Preservation

Other thoughts on historic preservation expressed in the open-ended comments include:

- New construction should have a design criteria, especially downtown
- Historic buildings create a sense of place and a depth to a place
- Need to consider condition of buildings and whether they are worth restoring
- Refurbish buildings not in use for low income housing



- Yakima has knocked down too many historic buildings and should save what's left
- Yakima needs to be progressive to survive and should not try to preserve the past

## 2.6 Employment

### Employment Opportunities

The employment opportunities that are most desired in Yakima, as identified by respondents, include professional services, education, and manufacturing/industry positions.

**Exhibit 8. What types of employment opportunities would you like to see encouraged in Yakima?**

	Total Score	Rank
Professional services	1,618	1
Education	1,383	2
Manufacturing/Industry	1,299	3
Retail	1,269	4
Food/wine/beer industries	1,251	5
Construction	1,112	6
Tourism	1,098	7
Health	1,091	8
Arts	1,028	9
Government	651	10
Other	278	11

N = 183

Note: Scores are weighted calculations. Items ranked higher are given a greater score than items that are ranked lower. The total score for each item is the sum of the weighted scores.

### Comments on Employment Opportunities

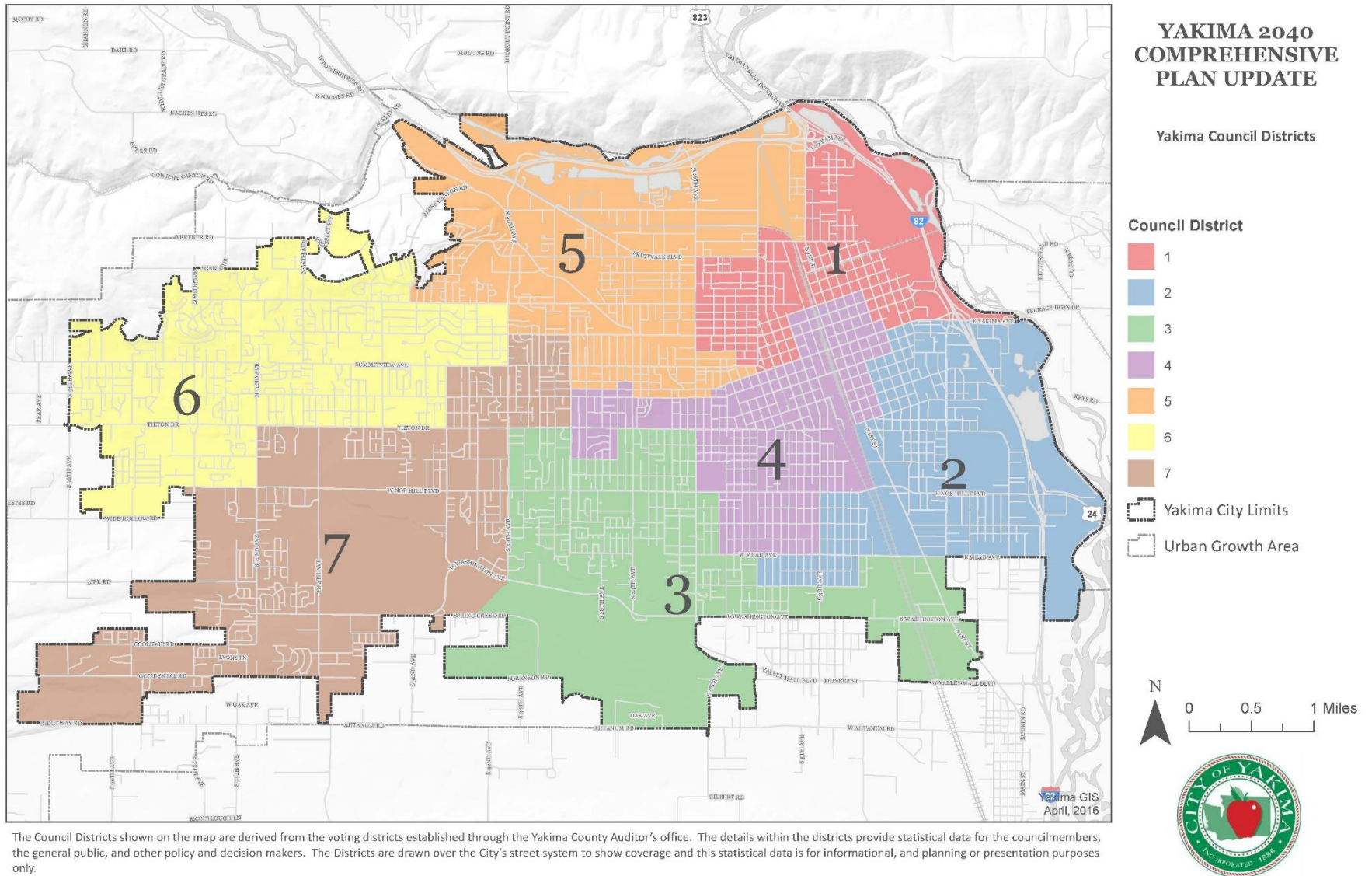
Other thoughts on employment opportunities expressed in the open-ended comments include:

- Yakima needs technology based companies and start ups
- There needs to be opportunities for the homeless
- Tourism and arts are a huge opportunity
- Yakima needs better paying jobs
- Need Recreation-related jobs
- Need nonprofits and social development agencies
- Yakima could use more technical education, training and universities related to the local employment opportunities

## 2.7 Districts

Several questions asked respondents to offer location information about where they would like to see retail and employment activities. The Districts are represented in Exhibit 9 below.

## Exhibit 9. City of Yakima Council Districts



## Retail by District

The districts where the majority of respondents hope to see more retail shopping are District 1 and District 4, which is downtown, and the area southwest of downtown. All districts received votes.

### Exhibit 10. I would like to see more retail shopping concentrated in the following district.

District	Count
District 1	68
District 2	50
District 3	53
District 4	72
District 5	55
District 6	45
District 7	45

N = 165

## Employment by District

The districts where the majority of respondents hope to see more employment opportunities include District 1, District 4, and District 2, which includes downtown and the areas south and southwest of downtown. Districts 3 and 5 also ranked highly, which are the areas just east of 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue. All districts received votes.

### Exhibit 11. I would like to see more employment opportunities concentrated in the following district.

District	Count
District 1	78
District 2	71
District 3	64
District 4	75
District 5	60
District 6	44
District 7	42

N = 162

## 2.8 Comprehensive Plan Vision

### Key Concepts and Ideas

The key goals and for Yakima that were identified as most important for inclusion in the 20-year vision statement include quality of life, a prosperous community, a healthy economy, and safe neighborhoods.

**Exhibit 12. Thinking ahead to 2040, what key concepts/ideas/goals are most important to be included in the City's 20-year vision statement?**

	Total Score	Rank
Quality of Life	2,081	1
Prosperous community	2,061	2
Healthy economy	1,974	3
Safe neighborhoods	1,713	4
Walkability	1,465	5
Vibrant downtown	1,342	6
Future development	1,333	7
Adaptive reuse of existing buildings	1,304	8
Public/private partnerships	1,301	9
Infill development	1,142	10
Social equality	991	11
Public transit	983	12
Urban growth	971	13
Compact/condensed growth	554	14

N = 183

Note: Scores are weighted calculations. Items ranked higher are given a greater score than items that are ranked lower. The total score for each item is the sum of the weighted scores. The rank is the overall rank for all entries based on the weighted scores for each item.

### Neighborhood- Level Changes

The survey asked respondents what they would like to see happen or change in their neighborhood. There were 73 responses to the open-ended question. Some of the themes that emerged include:

- Yakima's neighborhoods need more:
  - Access to government programs
  - Job opportunities
  - Safety and connectivity through sidewalk, bike land, and transit improvements
  - Daily interaction between neighbors and the community, places for people to gather, and community involvement
  - Art, music, theater
  - Neighborhood services, such as corner stores, retail, coffee shops
  - Parks
- Neighborhoods need to be cleaned up and safer
- Housing needs to be maintained and improved
- The infrastructure and services are below standard, such as a lack of sidewalks and basic sewer/water infrastructure, road maintenance
- Yakima's neighborhoods should all be equal and provide an equal quality of life
- The neighborhoods need to be cleaned up

## Other Growth-Related Comments

The survey asked respondents if they would like to comment on anything else related to Yakima's growth. There were 71 responses. The following themes emerged from the comments:

- Need to build the downtown plaza with adequate parking
- City transit service should increase service area and frequency
- Public spending priorities should on basic neighborhood needs first, such as streets, water, sewer, street lights, sidewalks, storm drainage
- Yakima should adopt the bicycle master plan
- Need a de-emphasis on industrial society and isolated independent existence
- Need better and safer parking options downtown
- Yakima's appearance can be improved
- The homelessness issue is concerning
- Yakima needs more walking/bike paths
- There should be more smart infill development
- Yakima needs to think about the whole community, not just the high class or Caucasian community
- There needs to be an improved quality of daily life for all residents
- Yakima should abandon the proposed plaza
- An East-west arterial like Washington is needed further north
- Yakima needs more job opportunities for growth
- We want a downtown with character and uniqueness that will draw residents, businesses and tourists
- Need to be a healthier Yakima that takes advantage of the weather and produce
- Yakima should embrace the diverse culture

## 2.9 Ongoing Public Participation

### Update Process Participation

When asked how they would like to participate in the Comprehensive Plan Update process, participants identified online surveys and public open houses as the most desirable outreach methods.

#### **Exhibit 13. How would you like to participate in the update process?**

	Count
Public open house	91
Additional online surveys	145
Public meetings before the Yakima Planning Commission	78
Guest speaker from City at my neighborhood	48
Other	5

N = 172

Other preferences for participation identified in open-ended comments include:

- Meetings available online
- Detailed information on city website
- Serving on an advisory committee
- Bring in outside consultants
- Mailed surveys with comments
- Guest speakers at my workplace
- Facebook
- Guest speakers attending organizational meetings throughout town

### Contact Preference

Survey respondents would most like to be contacted about the updated process through email, newspaper, social media, and the city website.

**Exhibit 14. How would you most like to be contacted about the update process?**

	Count
Email	99
Newspaper	88
Posters	17
Postcards	31
Social media	74
City website	70

N = 177

### District Identity

There were survey-takers representing all seven districts in Yakima. The most highly represented districts include District 4, District 6, and District 1.

**Exhibit 15. What district do you most identify with? (I.e. live/work/own a business, etc.)**

District	Count	Percentage
District 1	27	15%
District 2	3	2%
District 3	24	13%
District 4	43	24%
District 5	24	13%
District 6	36	20%
District 7	24	13%
Total	181	100%

N=181